

# **Guidelines for Effective and Efficient Meetings**

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Effective meetings occur when two things happen: a clear and reasonable agenda is determined and individuals come to the meeting prepared to discuss items on the agenda and take appropriate actions. In this way, it is the responsibility of every member to make each meeting as efficient and effective as possible.

An effective meeting will:

- start on time
- follow an agenda
- adhere to parliamentary procedure
- demonstrate respect for everyone in attendance and their points of view
- keep discussions focused and on point
- encourage participation and an open exchange of ideas and information
- make use of staff expertise and experience

## **Working with Town Staff**

To work well with the commission, committee or board staff liaison, or Town employee, the commission member can be more effective if they:

- **Ask questions.** You need as much information as possible in order to understand an issue before you cast your vote. It is the job of Town staff to study and understand complex situations. Ask for clarification if you need it.
- **Inform staff or Chair of meeting absences in advance.** If you know you will need to miss a meeting because of a schedule conflict, let the staff liaison or Chair know about it as far in advance as possible. This allows meetings to be rescheduled if it is clear there will not be a quorum.
- **Treat all staff as professionals.**
- **Communicate clearly, honestly, and directly.**
- **Build a relationship based on mutual trust and respect.**
- **Don't ask Town staff to perform tasks or share information outside the role as liaison.**